Proximate futures in English and Turkish: An analogy between spatial and temporal proximity[1]

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1 Overview

Proximate futures express that an eventuality will hold at a time in the future that is close to the reference time (RT) from tense.

In **English** and **Turkish**, proximate futures are realized via an infinitival form of a verb appearing beneath the morpheme **about** or **üzere**, respectively (1).

- In English (1a), this verb can either be perfective (Wurmbrand, 2014) or marked as imperfective.

- In Turkish (1b), imperfective marking is not possible under *üzere*.

(1)   a. Daphne **is about to** sit/be sitting.
       b. Defne {otur-mak} / {#otur-uyor ol-mak} **üzere**.
           Defne {sit-INF}   / {sit-IMPF   be-INF} **PROX**
           'Defne **is about to** sit.'

> Beyond temporal closeness, how do proximate futures like (1) differ semantically from other future expressions, such as English WOLL/*be going to* or Turkish *-AcAk*?[2]

Past work on the semantics of future expressions has primarily focused on the contrast between WOLL and *be going to* (e.g., Copley, 2002; Klecha, 2014).

- However, a number of interpretive differences have been identifed between these futures and *be about to* (Hill, 2025), which I expand on in §2.

What still remains to be seen:

- **(i)** The precise semantic contribution of proximate futures like *be about to* and/or *üzere*.

- **(ii)** The extent to which the meaning of proximate futures varies cross-linguistically.

To answer this question, in §3, I draw attention to the observation that in addition to **temporal closeness**, both *about* and *üzere* can be used in other contexts to express **spatial closeness** (2).

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[2]Throughout this talk, I will use the term WOLL to refer to an untensed form of the future expression *will* (e.g., Abusch, 1997).

(2)   a.   Glass was scattered **about** the room.

      b.   Zarf   masa-nın **üzerinde**-ydi

         envelope table-GEN **on**-PST

         'The envelope was on the table.'

The common thread I draw between the temporal and spatial forms is as follows, akin to Iatridou (2014) for the perfect aspect:

- Like the spatial intervals introduced by their prepositional counterparts, **proximate futures in English and Turkish introduce a temporal interval whose boundaries are restricted**.

- This restriction results in temporal closeness.

I then argue in §4 that **this temporal interval serves as a reference time (RT)** and **is a parallel of the perfect time span (PTS)** (McCoard, 1978; Dowty, 1979; Iatridou et al., 2001).

My proposal thus positions proximate futures as a mirror of the "hot news" perfect in (3) (McCawley, 1971):

(3)   The Phillies have won!

- Proximate futures and "hot news" perfects are similar in that they come with an additional restriction of **proximity to the RT from tense**.

     – "Hot news" perfects: Recent past.

     – Proximate futures: Near future.

- Proximate futures differ by lacking the added pragmatic component of the eventuality being noteworthy (e.g., Portner, 2003).

Roadmap of sections:
§2 Semantic properties of proximate futures in English and Turkish
§3 An analogy between temporal and spatial proximity
§4 Future shifting as high aspect
§5 Formal analysis of proximate futures
§6 Conclusion

2   Semantic properties of proximate futures in English and Turkish

Proximate futures require the upcoming eventuality to hold at a time that is close to the RT from tense. What counts as temporally close is **context-dependent** (Hill, 2025).

- In (4), a six year time interval is sufficiently close within the context to render *be about to* felicitous.

(4)   When the American Revolution ended in 1783, France **was about to** undergo their own revolution, which began in 1789.

Beyond temporal closeness, I now discuss **three additional properties** of proximate futures in English and Turkish that any semantic account will need to derive:

- Under a proximate future, the described eventuality **cannot have started yet** in typical contexts (§2.1).

    - An exception to this generalization will be discussed in §4.2.

- English and Turkish proximate futures differ in whether they uniformly trigger **modal subordination**: English *be about to* does, while Turkish *üzere* does not (§2.2).

- Proximate futures in English and Turkish result in **displacement** when they appear with the past tense (§2.3).

2.1 The start of the eventuality

Both *be about to* (Hill, 2025) and *üzere* require that **the eventuality in question has not been instantiated already** (5).

(5)   *Context: It's almost noon, and you've been tirelessly working at your desk all day. You plan to continue doing so throughout the afternoon. Your colleague asks what you'll do when it hits 12PM.*

     a.   I will/am going to/**#am about to** work.
     b.   I will/am going to/**#am about to** be working.
     c.   (Ben) {çalış-acağ-ım} / {**#çalış-mak üzere-yim**}
        1.SG   {work-FUT-1.SG} / {**work-INF   PROX-1.SG**}

        'I will/**#am about to** work.'

- Under the context in (5), the proximate future can only be used if the speaker hasn't started working.

    - WOLL, *be going to*, and *-AcAK*, in contrast, are all acceptable in (5).

- In English, this judgment holds both when the infinitival form is aspectually bare infinitive (5a) and when it's marked with *-ing* (5b).

Next, in §2.1.1 and §2.1.2, I demonstrate that this requirement is the source of the infelicity for proximate futures with **predicates of personal taste** and **objective individual-level predicates**.

2.1.1 Predicates of personal taste

Many speakers find proximate futures **infelicitous with predicates of personal taste (PPTs)** (6).

(6)   a.   The bread will/is going to/**%is about to** be tasty.
     b.   Ekmek lezzetli {ol-acak} / {**%ol-mak üzere**}
        bread   tasty   {be-FUT} / {**be-INF   PROX**}
        'The bread will/**%is about to** be tasty.'

- In both English and Turkish, speakers vary in whether they accept the proximate futures in (6).

- Some speakers find them fully unacceptable, while others find them appropriate in contexts where a future change of state is expected: e.g., a special ingredient will be added to the bread dough that improves its taste.

In contrast, other future expressions (WOLL, *be going to*, *-AcAk*) are not only acceptable with PPTs, but also **obviate the acquaintance inference of PPTs** (e.g., Pearson, 2013; Klecha, 2014; Ninan, 2014; Anand & Korotkova, 2018; etc.).

- Because epistemic modals (e.g., English *must*) also obviate the acquaintance inference, examples like (7) have been used to argue that future expressions are modal operators (Klecha, 2014).

(7)   *Context: Your friend just gave you a loaf of bread. You've never tried their baking before, but you're confident it'll taste delicious when you try it.*

     a.   This bread **will** be tasty.
     b.   #This bread **is** tasty.
     c.   Bu   ekmek lezzetli **ol-acak**
        DEM bread tasty   **be-FUT**
        'This bread will be tasty.'
     d.   #Bu ekmek lezzetli ∅
        DEM bread tasty   **be.PRS**
        Intended: 'This bread is tasty.'

Given this, the infelicity of English *be about to* with PPTs has been taken as evidence that it is non-modal (Hill, 2025).

However, I point out that this pattern cannot be traced to its (non-)modality:

- If *be about to* were non-modal, PPTs would still be expected to be felicitous, but they would generate an acquaintance inference like the simple present sentences in (7b, 7d).

Additionally, **complex PPTs** in English, which have been argued to be stage-level rather than individual-level (Pearson, 2022), don't result in the same degraded judgments under *be about to* (8).

(8)   a.   Her tattoo **is about to** look beautiful, but she hasn't gotten it yet.
     b.   %Her tattoo **is about to** be beautiful, but she hasn't gotten it yet.

Like with other future expressions, the acquaintance inference is obviated with *be about to* in (8a).

- This suggests that the meaning of *be about to* involves a modal component, akin to WOLL and *be going to*.

- I will return to the (non-)modal status of proximate futures when I discuss modal subordination in §2.2 and displacement in §2.3.

2.1.2   Individual-level predicates

In addition to PPTs, proximate futures are also **infelicitous with objective I-level predicates (ILPs)** (9).

- Like the PPT examples in (6), the ILPs in (9) are only accepted under proximate futures when they are accommodated as stage-level (see Hill, 2025).

(9)   a.   The bread will/is going to/%**is about to** organic.
      b.   Ekmek organik {ol-acak} / {%**ol-mak üzere**}
         bread   organic {be-FUT} / {**be-INF**   **PROX**}
         'The bread will/%**is about to** be organic.'

What leads to the degraded judgments for I-level predicates (both subjective and objective) with proximate futures (6, 9)?

- I propose that because of proximate futures' requirement that the eventuality cannot have started yet, ILPs are rendered infelicitous by virtue of their denoting **permanent properties** (e.g., Carlson, 1977; Magri, 2009; etc.).

- I formalize this requirement in §5.

2.2   Modal subordination

Despite both expressing the temporal proximity of a future eventuality, ***be about to*** **in English and** ***üzere*** **in Turkish pattern in triggering modal subordination** (Roberts, 1989; 1996):

- Evidence that English WOLL and *be going to* are modal operators is their ability to trigger modal subordination (Klecha, 2014).

- However, despite both being modal, WOLL and *be going to* differ in whether they obligatorily trigger modal subordination (Klecha, 2011; Matthewson et al., 2022).

- English *be about to* and Turkish *üzere* also differ w.r.t. modal subordination, despite both expressing proximate futurity.

English *be about to* is **felicitous** as a trigger for modal subordination in contexts like the one shown in (10a).

(10)   *Context: You're talking with your friend about how their roommate, Eylül, is taking a flight today. Her flight is boarding soon, but neither of you know when she left for the airport. You have an in-depth geographical knowledge of the route she's taking.*

      a.   If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now. She**'s about to** take an exit off the highway.

      b.   If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now. #She took an exit off the highway.

In contrast, Turkish *üzere* is **infelicitous** in contexts like (11a).[3]

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[3]While I mark (11a) with a #, one of the Turkish speakers consulted did find this modal subordination example acceptable. Such an inter-speaker difference is not unsurprising given that in Turkish, syntactic and semantic judgments have a tendency to be variable across regions/dialects. Therefore, it is possible that (11a) is available in some Turkish speakers' grammars.

- To remedy (11a), it is necessary to include a modal element like the epistemic *olmalı* "must be".

(11)   *Context: See (10).*

     a. Eylül ev-den   30 dakika önce ayrıl-dı-ysa,   neredeyse havaalanı-nda şu an.
        Eylül home-ABL 30 minute ago leave-PST-COND almost   airport-LOC   this moment
        #Otoyol'-dan çık-mak **üzere**.
        highway-ABL exit-INF **PROX**

        Intended: 'If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now. She**'s about to** take an exit off the highway.'

     b. Eylül ev-den   30 dakika önce ayrıl-dı-ysa,   neredeyse havaalanı-nda şu an.
        Eylül home-ABL 30 minute ago leave-PST-COND almost   airport-LOC   this moment
        #Otoyol'-dan çık-tı.
        highway-ABL exit-PST

        Intended: 'If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now. She took an exit off the highway.'

I point out that like *üzere* in Turkish, English ***be on the verge/brink of*** are **degraded** and **variable** in the relevant modal subordination context (12a), as is the **progressive** (12b).

- Note that while the progressive is typically analyzed as modal (e.g., Dowty, 1979; Portner, 1998; Arregui et al., 2014), this behavior persists.

(12)   *Context: See (10).*

     a. If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now. %She**'s on the verge/brink of** taking an exit off the highway.

     b. If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now. %She**'s taking** an exit off the highway.

2.3   Displacement

When in the **past tense**, English *be about to* and Turkish *üzere* involve **displacement**, where evaluation is shifted away from the actual world.

- In (13), PROX(ϕ) does not entail ϕ.

- Similar displacement is shown by past tense forms of modal operators like WOLL and *be going to* (Klecha, 2014), as well as with the well-known imperfective paradox (e.g., Dowty, 1979).

(13)   *Context: After hearing a funny joke, you almost let out a laugh. However, you suddenly remembered something depressing and didn't end up laughing.*

     a. I **was about to** laugh.
     b. (Ben) gülmek **üzere-ydi**
        1.SG   laugh-INF **PROX-PST**
        'I **was about to** laugh.'

Given that both *be about to* and *üzere* show the same displacement behavior, I will pursue **a modal analysis of both**.

- What, then, is the cause of the infelicity of *üzere* as a trigger of modal subordination for the context in §2.2?

- To account for this, I will treat *üzere* as having an inertial modal base in §5 (e.g., Dowty 1979; Portner, 1998; Arregui et al., 2014; Matthewson et al., 2022).

2.4   Interim summary

> The data discussed in §2 support the following generalizations:
>
> - **First,** for typical contexts in both English and Turkish, proximate futures are infelicitous with eventualities that already hold at the RT introduced by tense.
>
> - **Second**, English and Turkish proximate futures differ as to whether they trigger modal subordination in the context in §2.2: English *be about to* does, and Turkish *üzere* does not.
>
> - **Third,** the evaluation of both English and Turkish proximate futures is displaced from the actual world under the past tense.

The generalizations lead to the following question:

- How do we develop a semantics for English *be about to* and Turkish *üzere* that can capture the semantic properties they share, as well as the ways in which they diverge?

3   An analogy between temporal and spatial proximity

In addition to expressing proximity in time, the forms *about* and *üzere* also appear as **locative prepositions** in other sentential contexts (14, repeated from 2).

(14)   a.   Glass was scattered **about** the room.
        b.   Zarf   masa-nın **üzerinde**-ydi
            envelope table-GEN **on**-PST
            'The envelope was on the table.'

A **common semantic core** between these prepositions:

- For both *about* and *üzerinde* "on" in (14), it is entailed that the relevant objects are (spatially) close to the entity scoping beneath the preposition.

To illustrate, a semantics for *on* is given in (15).

(15) $[\![on]\!] = \lambda A.\lambda v.\text{EXT}(v,A) \, \& \, |v| < r_0$
     where r_0 is a small positive number s.t. $r_0 \approx 0$ (from Zwarts & Winter, 2000)

- Under a vector-based semantics for spatial reference (e.g., Zwarts & Winter, 2000), spatial proximity for prepositions is encoded by restricting the length of the relevant vector.

- EXT(v,A) denotes a vector v that extends outward from the boundary of a set of points A.

- The length of v, $|v|$, is restricted by a contextually-dependent resource variable r.

> **The analogy I draw between temporal and spatial proximity:**
>
> - Proximate futures introduce a future time interval whose boundaries are contextually restricted, resulting in temporal closeness.
>
> - Their prepositional analogues restrict the boundaries of v, resulting in spatial closeness.

Iatridou (2014) draws a similar comparison between times and space by for the perfect, demonstrated by the data in (16).

- Both (16a) and (16b) introduce an interval (temporal or spatial) i and assert the absence of an object within i: either a seizure-having event, or a painting by Vermeer.

(16)   Adapted from Iatridou (2014):
      a.   In the last five years, she hasn't had a seizure.
      b.   In her living room, she doesn't have a Vermeer.

If this analogy is common to both proximate futures and the perfect aspect, do they share other semantic similarities?

- In §4, I substantiate my analysis empirically and show that the answer is "yes."

4   Future shifting as high aspect

In recent work on the semantics of the future, its temporal contribution has been traced to **the high aspect** PROSP (Mucha, 2016; Pancheva & Zubizarreta, 2023).

- **Viewpoint aspect**: Relates an RT to the time of the eventuality (e.g., Klein, 1994).

- **High aspect**: Relates an RT to another RT.

A typical semantics of PROSP is given in (17).

- Here, PROSP introduces a succession relation between the RT from tense t and another RT t'.

(17) $[\![\text{PROSP}]\!] = \lambda p.\lambda t.\lambda w.\exists t' \, [\, t < t' \,\&\, p(t')(w) \,]$

While PROSP in (17) and the perfect are both high aspects, PROSP does not specify any information about the boundaries of t'.

This differs from XN-theoretic analyses of the perfect (18), where the right boundary of the PTS is set as the RT from tense (e.g., McCoard, 1978; Dowty, 1979; Iatridou et al., 2001; Pancheva, 2003; etc.).

(18)   a. XN(t,t') =: t is the final subinterval of t'
        b. ⟦PERF⟧^{g,c} = λp.λt.∃t' [XN(t,t') & p(t')]

In this section, I motivate **a high aspect semantics for proximate futures** where the **left boundary** of the RT they introduce is specified.

- In this way, the current account combines insights from previous work on the semantics of **the prospective** (Mucha, 2016; Pancheva & Zubizarreta, 2023) and **the XN theory of the perfect** (Mc-Coard, 1978; Dowty, 1979; Iatridou et al., 2001).

> **I show that for both the perfect aspect and (proximate) future expressions:**
>
> - In both English and Turkish, certain adverbials (e.g., *for*-adverbials) are ambiguous w.r.t. where they attach: either (i) at the eventuality-level, or (ii) at the level of high aspect (§4.1).
>
> - In English, where both imperfective and perfective marking are available under (proximate) futures and the perfect, different readings arise (e.g., UNIVERSAL, EXPERIENTIAL, etc.) (§4.2).

4.1   Eventuality-level versus high aspect-level adverbials

Under the perfect aspect, it is ambiguous where certain adverbials (e.g., *for*-adverbials) attach: they can either be eventuality-level or perfect-level (Dowty, 1979; Vlach, 1993; Iatridou et al., 2001).

(19)   Maryam has lived in Massachusetts for five years.

Perfect-level vs. eventuality-level temporal adverbial readings (19):

- **Perfect-level:** The adverbial *for five years* modifies the perfect time span (PTS) s.t. its duration is five years.

    - **Perfect-level reading of (19):** The PTS is an interval spanning from 5 years ago until now, and throughout the PTS, Maryam lives in Massachusetts.

- **Eventuality-level:** The adverbial *for five years* modifies the time of the eventuality s.t. its duration is five years.

    - **Eventuality-level reading of (19):** The PTS is an interval spanning from, e.g., the start of Maryam's life until now, and within the PTS, there is a 5-year-long eventuality of Maryam living in Massachusetts.

Proximate futures show a similar ambiguity between eventuality-level and high aspect-level readings:

- In (20-21), the *for*-adverbial can either modify the time interval introduced by the proximate future or the time of the relevant eventuality.

Adverbial ambiguity with English *be about to* (20):

(20)   a. *Context: Eli was holding in his laughter for 5 minutes. Suddenly, he remembered something depressing, and his mood soured.*

       Eli **was about to** laugh for five minutes.

   b. *Context: I am a clairvoyant comedian, and I know how long people will laugh when I tell a joke. I almost told Eli a joke that would've made him laugh for 5 minutes, but I was suddenly interrupted.*

       Eli **was about to** laugh for five minutes.

Adverbial ambiguity with Turkish *üzere* (20):[4]

(21)   a. *Context: Ali was holding in his laughter for 5 minutes. Suddenly, he remembered something depressing, and his mood soured.*

       Ali beş dakika boyunca   gülmek   **üzere-ydi**
       Ali five minute throughout laugh-INF **PROX-PST**

       'Ali **was about to** laugh for five minutes.'

   b. *Context: I am a clairvoyant comedian, and I know how long people will laugh when I tell a joke. I almost told Ali a joke that would've made him laugh for 5 minutes, but I was suddenly interrupted.*

       Ali beş dakika boyunca   gülmek   **üzere-ydi**
       Ali five minute throughout laugh-INF **PROX-PST**

       'Ali **was about to** laugh for five minutes.'

4.2   Beyond the perfect: different readings with high aspect

It is well-known that the perfect can give rise to **different readings**, modulated by temporal adverbials and viewpoint aspect (e.g., Iatridou et al., 2001; Pancheva, 2003).

- The UNIVERSAL **perfect** in (22a) entails that the eventuality holds at the RT introduced by tense.

  - An **imperfective** viewpoint aspect (along with an *ever since*-adverbial) results in a U-perfect.

- The EXPERIENTIAL **perfect** in (22b) does not entail that the eventuality holds at the RT introduced by tense.

  - A **perfective** viewpoint aspect results in an E-perfect.[5]

(22)   a. It has been raining ever since 5pm, #but it isn't raining anymore. (UNIVERSAL)
      b. It has rained since 5pm, but it isn't raining anymore. (EXPERIENTIAL)

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[4]Like with the modal subordination example in (11a), judgments for (21) were variable: one of the Turkish speakers consulted found both of the examples in (21) unacceptable. Thus, it is possible that the semantics of *üzere* is subject to regional/dialectal differences in Turkish.

[5]Unlike *ever since*-adverbials, *since*-adverbials do not enforce a particular perfect reading (e.g., Iatridou et al., 2001).

I show that in English, where both imperfective and perfective marking are available under the (proximate) future, **the same difference in readings emerges**.

Under **woll**, imperfective versus perfective marking results in different entailments about whether the eventuality holds at the RT from tense (23):

(23)   a. It**'ll be raining** until 5pm, #but it isn't raining yet.
        b. It**'ll rain** until 5pm, but it isn't raining yet.

Proximate futures typically do not allow the eventuality to overlap with the RT (§2.1), even when it has imperfective marking (24a).

- Even under the perfect, the imperfective does not always result in universal readings (24b) (e.g., Iatridou et al., 2001; Pancheva, 2003).

(24)   a. It **is about to** be raining until 5pm, but it isn't raining yet.
        b. It has been raining since Monday, but it finally stopped.

That being said, a **similar contrast in entailments** can be seen in specific contexts with *be about to* involving **predictions made from non-abductive/*modus ponens* reasoning** (e.g., Peirce, 1955; Winans, 2016).

- Like English woll (Winans, 2016), *be about to* can be used in cases of non-abductive/*modus ponens* reasoning.

- **modus ponens**: If *p*, then *q*. *p*. Therefore, *q*.

- In (25), the relevant non-abductive reasoning is then as follows:

  – It is 10pm. → Dawn is asleep.

- Here, where it is contextually entailed that Dawn is asleep at the RT from tense, **the imperfective is felicitous** (25a) and **the perfective is infelicitous** (25b).

(25)   *Context: You are bringing your friend over to your apartment at 10pm. You know that every night, your roommate Dawn is already fast asleep well before this time. Right before entering the apartment, you make a prediction to your friend:*

    a. Watch this — Dawn**'s about to** be sleeping.
    b. #Watch this — Dawn**'s about to** sleep.

- In (26), the relevant non-abductive reasoning is instead:

  – It is 10pm. → Dawn will go to sleep very soon.

- When it is instead contextually entailed that Dawn is not asleep at the RT from tense, **the imperfective is infelicitous** (26a) and **the perfective is felicitous** (26b).

(26)   *Context: You are bringing your friend over to your apartment at 10pm. You know that every night, your roommate Dawn goes to sleep just after this time. Right before entering the apartment, you make a prediction to your friend:*

    a. #Watch this — Dawn**'s about to** be sleeping.
    b. Watch this — Dawn**'s about to** sleep.

5 Formal analysis of proximate futures

In (27), I give my proposed semantics for PROX.

- Under (27), proximate futures quantify over possible worlds and introduce a future time interval *t"* whose left boundary (LB) is the RT.

- This temporal relation mirrors PERF in (18): rather than introducing a PTS whose right boundary is equivalent to the RT, *t"* instead **extends forward into the future**.

- A contextual resource variable r_{CLOSE} restricts *t"* s.t. it is proximal to *t'*.

  - Thus, like the **"hot news" perfect**, the interval introduced by the proximate future cannot extend far beyond the RT from tense.

(27)   a. LB(t,t') =: t is the initial subinterval of t'

        b. $\llbracket \text{PROX}_{\text{ENG}} \rrbracket^{g,c,w} =$
$\lambda p.\lambda t'.\lambda w.\forall w'$ compatible with the circumstances in w at t' [$\exists t"$[LB(t',t") & t" $\subset r_{CLOSE}$ & p(t")(w')]]
where r_{CLOSE} is a temporal interval whose duration is short within the context

        c. $\llbracket \text{PROX}_{\text{TUR}} \rrbracket^{g,c,w} =$
$\lambda p.\lambda t'.\lambda w.\forall w'$ that continue normally from w at t' $\exists t"$[LB(t',t") & t" $\subset r_{CLOSE}$ & p(t")(w')]
where r_{CLOSE} is a temporal interval whose duration is short within the context

The English PROX in (27b) differs from the Turkish in (27c) only in its **modal base**.

In English, for concreteness, I treat the modal base as **circumstantial**.

- The appropriate modal base for the semantics of the future is a source of great debate: proposals include **metaphysical** (Condoravdi, 2002), **circumstantial** (Abusch, 2012), and **epistemic** (Giannakidou & Mari, 2018).

In Turkish, I instead analyze its modal base as **inertial** (e.g., Dowty, 1979; Portner, 1998; Arregui et al., 2014; Matthewson et al., 2022).

- I suggest that such a modal base could be the source of two diverging properties of *üzere*:

  - **(i)** Its incompatibility with imperfective marking on the verb (1b).

  - **(ii)** Its inability to trigger modal subordination in (11), like the English progressive in (12).

- For a more detailed implementation of such a modal base, see Portner (1998) on the English progressive and Matthewson et al. (2022) on progressive futures in Gitksan.

5.1 Aspectually bare infinitives under proximate futures

Let's walk through how this semantics derives the expected truth conditions for the sentence in (28).

(28)   Daphne is about to sit.

Following Wurmbrand (2014), I treat the infinitive *to sit* as **perfective**, the semantics of which are given in (29).

(29) $[\![\text{PRFV}]\!]^g = \lambda P.\lambda t.\exists e\ [\ \tau(e) \subseteq t\ \&\ P(e)\ ]$

The fact that the eventuality has not yet begun results from the **perfective's containment relation**:

- Because $\tau(e)$ in (30) must fall within the interval *t"*, it cannot have started at a time preceding it.

(30) $[\![\text{Daphne is about to sit}]\!]^{g,c,w} = \exists t'[\ t' = t_c\ \&\ \forall w'$ compatible with the circumstances in w at t' $[\ \exists t"[$ LB(t',t") $\&$ t" $\subset$ r$_{\text{CLOSE}}$ $\&$ $\exists e[\ \tau(e) \subseteq t"$ $\&$ sit(e, Daphne, w') $]]]]$
where r$_{\text{CLOSE}}$ is a temporal interval whose duration is short within the context

5.2   Imperfective-marked infinitives under proximate futures

Now, let's consider a case where the infinitive has imperfective morphology, like (31).

(31)   Delilah is about to be crying.

Imperfective-marked infinitives also typically require the eventuality to have not yet started under proximate futures (5b).

With this in mind, I treat infinitives with progressive morphology as having a **"neutral" imperfective aspect** in (32).

- Originally proposed by Smith (1991), "neutral" imperfectives have been proposed for experiential readings of the perfect with statives and progressive-marked participles (Pancheva, 2003).

- **Consequence of (32):** Overlap between the LB of the interval introduced by PROX and the eventuality is disallowed.

(32) $[\![\text{IMPF}_{\text{NEUT}}]\!]^g = \lambda P.\lambda t.\exists e[\ t \cap \tau(e) \neq \varnothing\ \&\ P(e)\ \&\ \exists t'[t' \in t\ \&\ t' \notin \tau(e)\ \&\ \forall t"[t" \in \tau(e) \to t' < t"]]]$
$\tau(e)$ overlaps with t, and there is an initial subinterval of t where $\tau(e)$ does not hold.

While a "neutral" imperfective is not unproblematic, the availability of experiential-like readings for imperfective-marked eventives and statives is a problem also faced by existing accounts of the perfect.

- See Altshuler (2014) for an alternative to "neutral" aspects.

The relevant truth conditions are given in (33).

(33) $[\![\text{Delilah is about to be crying}]\!]^{g,c,w} = \exists t'[\ t' = t_c\ \&\ \forall w'$ compatible with the circumstances in w at t' $[$ $\exists t"[$ LB(t',t") $\&$ t" $\subset$ r$_{\text{CLOSE}}$ $\&$ $\exists e[\ t" \cap \tau(e) \neq \varnothing\ \&\ \text{cry}(e, \text{Delilah}, w')\ \&\ \exists t'''[t''' \in t"\ \&\ t''' \notin \tau(e)\ \&\ \forall t''''[t'''' \in \tau(e) \to t''' < t'''']]]]]]$
where r$_{\text{CLOSE}}$ is a temporal interval whose duration is short within the context

Before concluding, a brief note on **the non-abductive examples from (25-26)**:

- While I've set aside the precise derivation of examples like (25-26) for the current talk, I point out that one way they could be captured is by assuming **an ambiguity between IMPF_{NEUT} and IMPF**.

- A semantics for IMPF is shown in (34).

- The presence of (34) would then allow the RT to overlap with $\tau(e)$ in the relevant predictive inference case in 25.

- In fact, such an ambiguity between IMPF_{NEUT} and IMPF has been claimed for imperfective eventives and statives under the perfect (Pancheva, 2003).

- If such an ambiguity between IMPF_{NEUT} and IMPF is present here, an open question:

  - Why do certain contexts (e.g., 25-26) lead to the availability of one versus the other for imperfective-marked verbs?

(34) $[\![\text{IMPF}]\!]^g = \lambda P.\lambda t.\exists e \, [\, t \subset \tau(e) \, \& \, P(e) \,]$

6 Conclusion

In summary, the current proposal contributes to our understanding of the semantics of proximate futures by:

- Deriving the semantic properties of English *be about to* and Turkish *üzere*, while formally differentiating them from other futures (WOLL, *be going to*, *-AcAk*).

- Contributing a parallel between temporal and spatial semantics via the future, compatible with existing work on the perfect (Iatridou, 2014).

- Motivating an analysis of proximate futures as high aspect where, in the reverse of the perfect, they introduce a time interval whose LB is the RT from tense.

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